

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT M 00059 301018Z

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

OMB-01 ACDA-05 /073 W

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P R 300601Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1160

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0059

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PP

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN COMMENTS ON BOUGAINVILLE SITUATION

REF: PORT MORESBY 0058

1. AUSTRALIAN HICOM CRITCHLEY SHARES PREVAILING GLOOM OVER BOUGAINVILLE SITUATION. HE TOLD ME TODAY THAT HE BELIEVES GPNG WILL BE FORCED TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE TO COPE WITH THE SITUATION. HE BELIEVES THE TALKS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE SECESSIONISTS ARE DOOMED TO FAILURE. THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CANNOT LET BOUGAINVILLE BECOME INDEPENDENT, BUT THE MATTER HAS DRIFTED TO THE POINT WHERE ONLY VIOLENCE WILL PREVENT INDEPENDENCE.

2. CRITCHLEY THINKS THAT THE MOST THE GPNG CAN OFFER THE SECESSIONISTS (SOME DEGREE OF DECENTRALIZATION WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LAW AND ORDER, MOST FINANCIAL MATTERS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ETC. TO REMAIN WITH THE (GPNG) WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE SECESSIONISTS. MOMIS AND SAREI WOULD ACCEPT AN ARRANGEMENT GRANTING
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PAGE 02 PORT M 00059 301018Z

A LARGE DEGREE OF AUTONOMY, AND HANNETT WOULD ACCEPT IT AS A STEP TOWARDS FULL INDEPENDENCE, CRITCHLEY

BELIEVES, BUT THE DEGREE OF AUTONOMY THE SECESSIONISTS WOULD INSIST ON WOULD GO FAR BEYOND WHAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT COULD POSSIBLY PERMIT. THE GRANTING OF A LARGE DEGREE OF AUTONOMY TO BOUGAINVILLE WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY DEMANDS FROM NEW BRITAIN AND OTHER AREAS WHICH WOULD TURN PNG INTO A CONFEDERATION, CRITCHLEY BELIEVES, WHICH WOULD IN TIME FALL APART.

3. COMMENT: THE EASY SOLUTION FOR THE GPNG AT THIS POINT IS AUTONOMY FOR BOUGAINVILLE AND THERE ARE

PRESSURES TO FOLLOW THAT COURSE (SEE REFTEL). IN THE LONG RUN HOWEVER, CRITCHLEY IS PROBABLY RIGHT IN PREDICTING THAT THIS COURSE COULD LEAD TO THE DISSOLUTION OF PNG.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PORTM00059
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760035-1195
From: PORT MORESBY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976015/aaaaadvf.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PORT MORESBY 58
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <16 SEP 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUSTRALIAN COMMENTS ON BOUGAINVILLE SITUATION
TAGS: PINT, PP, (CRITCHLEY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006